

Time Together by JoMo3

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Summary:

If someone had told Mike Wheeler two years ago that he'd fall for an Eggo-loving, superpower having, tattoo sporting girl named Eleven, he'd have said that they were crazy. I mean, Eleven was a number, not a name. But now here it was, and it all seemed so normal.

or

Mike and Eleven have a sleepover.

Time Together

On the night of the SnowBall, Mike and Eleven snuck out of the crowded gymnasium for some time to be together, just the two of them. Teachers were walking the hallways, so the two decided to walk outside into the chilly night. Mike immediately gave his jacket to El, who let it hang on her shoulders as the two made their way to a bench in front of the school.

After their dance to “Every Breath You Take,” the two had spent some time with their group of friends, the boys all happy to see El again. Eleven was still not too trusting of Max, even after noticing she and Lucas holding hands under the table.

Even after kissing her as they danced, Mike wanted some time, just he and El, before she had to go.

“So what did Hopper say?” Mike asked as the two settled on the bench.

Sighing, Eleven answered “I have to hide. Again.”

“For how long?”

“A year.”

Letting out a sigh of his own, Mike nodded as El put her head on his shoulder. He wrapped an arm around her.

“Can I come visit you?”

“He didn’t say,” El answered, her tone making it sound unlikely.

The two sat in a comfortable silence for a few minutes, the only sound the background bass of the music coming from the school building, and the gentle wind that blew.

“We should probably go in...” Mike began.

“I really missed you,” Eleven said, interrupting him.

Nodding, Mike said, "I really missed you, too, El."

"More than...more than I missed Lucas and Dustin," she added quietly. Looking up, she asked, "Is that bad?"

"No," he said, shaking his head. She sat up, and they locked eyes. She cupped his cheek, her warm hands adding heat to his already pink cheeks. Leaning in, she brought her soft lips to his own for a chaste kiss.

Mike could feel his heart racing, and with it a sudden urge to tell El how he felt. Not just that he had missed her, but what he felt, deep down, in his soul. "El, I, uh..." he stammered. "I wanted to..."

"El!" Hopper's voice called as he came out of the school doors. He glanced at the two huddled together, then back at Eleven. "What the hell are you doing out here?"

"We were talking," she said.

"Well, get back inside," Hopper said, his eyes scanning the darkness. "It's getting cold."

Eleven shrugged, and the two teens stood and went inside.

The rest of the evening was spent getting their picture taken by Jonathan, dancing to another song, and hanging out with their group at the table.

When the dance ended, Eleven was rushed out of the school, but not before she gave the boys a hug as she left.

Watching Hopper's truck pull into the night as Lucas' mom pulled up to take the boys home, Mike sighed.

It was going to be a long year.

If someone had told Mike Wheeler two years ago that he'd fall for an

Eggo-loving, superpower having, tattoo sporting girl named Eleven, he'd have said that they were crazy. I mean, Eleven was a *number* , not a name. But now here it was, and it all seemed so normal.

It was a month after the Snowball, and he still hadn't seen her. Chief Hopper had told everyone that it was important to keep Eleven hidden for a while, in order to make sure she was safe. But it was driving Mike crazy. After much whining on both ends, he and El eventually talked Hopper into letting them communicate on the radio twice a week, but only for five to ten minutes. The first week of their correspondence Mike had dominated the conversation, forgetting that El's vocabulary had improved. By the second week he had eased up some, with the two of them splitting the time.

During this absence, he gave a lot of thought to what he had began to say when the two of them were outside, sitting on the bench. He wanted to tell her how he felt about her...did she already know? Because he knew, deep down, that he loved her. But should he tell her that? Would it come off as creepy? They were only thirteen years old, wasn't that kind of young?

The other thing that he'd started to bring up, or ask her, was if she wanted to be his girlfriend. He was pretty sure she wouldn't understand; but it didn't matter, did it, if they couldn't see each other for a year.

He really missed her.

For her part, Eleven felt just the same, though possibly worse. Before the Mind Flayer, as the boys called it, at least her friends didn't know she was out there. But now, having seen them, hugged them, talked to them (and kissed one), it was as if she'd been given a wonderful gift, only to have it taken away and put on a shelf for a later date.

The talks with Mike helped, but she felt it wasn't enough. After closing the Gate took so much out of her, Hopper didn't like her using the Void to visit Mike as much. Mike...

She wanted to talk to him, sit with him, *see* him again; she didn't know how to describe it.

Of course, she wanted to see all of her friends, but Mike was in his own special category. Since the Snowball, she'd had one question on her mind:

What are we?

She wasn't friends with him, at least not like she was with Dustin and Lucas. You don't kiss friends, do you? Your heart doesn't beat through your chest when you meet your friend's eyes from across the room, and electricity doesn't flow through your body when they press their lips to yours.

She had tried using the dictionary that Hopper had given her to help define her feelings, but there wasn't anything inside it that could explain the sensation she got when she heard Mike's voice through the walkie.

A month and thirteen days after the Snowball, she'd had enough. When Hopper came home that evening, she was waiting at the table, arms folded and a scowl on her face.

"Uh-oh," Hopper said after locking the door and catching a glimpse of her. "I know that look." Taking off his hat and coat and placing them down, he sat across from her. "What's wrong?"

"I want to see Mike," she said.

"El, I told you, it's not..."

"I want. To see. *Mike*," she repeated, leaning over the table.

"You're not going to have another hissy fit, are you?" he asked, taking off his badge and rolling up his sleeves.

Her angry demeanor loosened for a second. "Hissy fit?"

"Yeah, hissy fit. Look it up in your dictionary," he offered, standing up and going to the fridge. "H-I-S-S-Y-F-I-T," he spelled. As he stooped down to see what food was left, his hand on the fridge door,

it suddenly slammed shut. “Hey!” he said, turning towards her.

“I want to see Mike,” she said for the third time, some of the anger creeping back into her voice as she wiped at her nose.

Sighing, Hopper sat back down and ran a hand through his hair. “Look, El, I know you want to. But doc Owens said...”

“I don’t care,” she said, her voice cracking a bit. Then, thinking for a moment, she said, “Com...compromise?”

Folding his own arms, Hopper asked, “Okay. What do you got in mind?”

“I will do chores. More. And Mike can come over.”

“I don’t really see how that’s a compromise, El,” Hopper answered, standing up. “And I don’t want you and your boyfriend to...”

“Boyfriend?”

Pausing, Hopper glanced at Eleven’s confused face. “Nevermind.”

“What’s boyfriend?”

“Nothing. Look, compromise is halfway happy, remember? What’s your halfway?”

“More work.”

Hopper went back to the fridge, and cast a warning look at Eleven as he opened it back up. Taking out a beer, he sighed. “Tell you what. Let’s give this more work thing a try over the next few days and see how that goes. Deal?”

“Deal,” she said, nodding.

And, true to her word, Eleven spent the next two days putting in more work: she scrubbed the bathroom, swept regularly. Usually the two of them alternated doing the dishes; but she began doing them for every meal, and she kept the cabin devoid of her Eggo plates. By the end of two days, Hopper had come around and agreed to let Mike

spend the night that coming Friday.

Days later, Mike rode his bike to the police station and Hopper drove him up to the cabin. Mike tried to remember the route, in case he wanted to come again sometime.

Eventually, Hopper pulled over to the side of the road and cut off the ignition. Turning to Mike, he let out a sigh.

“This isn’t going to be an every week thing, you got that?”

Mike nodded. He was still mad at Hopper (to say the least) about keeping El a secret for so long, but was trying to be on his best behavior so he’d be allowed to visit again.

“Don’t lead her on, either,” Hopper added, taking his hat off the dashboard. “Don’t make any promises that you can’t keep.” With that, he climbed out of the car. Mike grabbed his backpack, and followed after him.

The two trekked into the woods, and it wasn’t long before Mike could see a light up ahead. He felt butterflies climb into his stomach as they got closer, and the cabin came into view.

“Watch your step,” Hopper said. Mike looked down, and saw a wire that seemed to go from one tree to another. “Security system,” Hopper explained as he stepped over it.

Mike did the same, and the two closed the distance between them and the cabin. Once at the door, Hopper did a knock, and the door was unlocked and they entered.

From what Eleven had said on the walkie, Mike wasn’t expecting much from the cabin. True enough, it was small, but it felt...cozy. A fire crackled at one end of the large room, and he saw a section with a small bathroom, and a bed (that must’ve been Hopper’s), and then...her.

She stood by the table, a growing grin on her face as she rushed over and hugged Mike. He hugged her back just as tight as he felt Hopper walk around them.

“I’m so glad I got to see you,” Mike said as the two pulled away from each other, remaining close.

“Me too,” she added.

“Whatever you two got planned, better get to it,” Hopper said as he opened the fridge.

“Do you want to see my room?” Eleven asked Mike.

“Sure,” Mike nodded.

Smiling, she took his hand and led him into her room. To Mike, it wasn’t much; a bed against the wall and a dresser with two teddy bears on it. But looking at Eleven’s eyes, he could see how happy and proud she was to have a real room to call her own.

“It’s cool,” he said, taking off his backpack. “What do you want to do?”

The two began their time together watching cartoons on TV, Eleven snuggled into Mike’s side as Hopper made dinner and occasionally told the two to put some space between them. Mike told her about his school day, and how the boys were jealous that he got to come over and they didn’t. Eleven talked about her lonely day in the cabin, and how it was getting harder and harder to follow Hopper’s rules (which she recited verbatim) when Mike asked for clarification. Despite that, she was on cloud nine as she lay on the couch with Mike, a blanket over her lap and his hand in hers.

Mike felt the same, as he ran a finger over her knuckles; there was no place he’d rather be.

Pretty soon Hopper had dinner ready, and the three crowded around the table and ate. When they finished eating and the conversations had ended, Eleven dutifully took all of their plates and went to wash the dishes, Mike offering to help; she washed, he dried, while Hopper sat on the couch and watched basketball.

After the dishes were away the two sat at the table where Mike introduced her to checkers. Wanting to teach El a game, he had ransacked his basement in search of a game that'd be simple enough for her to play. Tucked away underneath Up Words had been his old checkers set.

"It's really easy to play," he told her as he set up the board. "You can either be red or black." He held up a red and black circle; she chose red. He showed her how to set up her side of the board.

"Okay," Mike said once the board was set up. "The goal is to capture all the other player's pieces. You can only move diagonal, like this," he said, modeling. "Understand?"

"Yes," she said, nodding.

The two spent the next hour playing. Mike would be lying if he didn't admit he was taking it easy on her, and there were a few times where he had to correct El from doing something that wasn't allowed. But after an hour, Mike reluctantly captured her last piece. To his delight, she didn't seem too troubled that she'd lost; she was just happy to be playing something with him.

The two cleaned up the board, then traded places with Hopper, whose game had ended.

"I brought a movie," Mike said, digging a VHS out of his backpack. Showing El the cover, she looked it over.

"ET?" she asked.

Nodding, Mike explained, "It's about this alien that comes to Earth. I think you might like it."

Eleven nodded as she settled under a blanket on the couch. Mike put the tape into the VCR, then joined her; she snuggled under the blanket, laying on his arm.

Hopper observed their closeness from the table, but didn't say anything.

When the movie finished (and Eleven loved it), Hopper told them to get ready for sleep. Eleven climbed from under the blanket and went to her room to change clothes. Mike dug a set of pajamas from his backpack and went into the small bathroom area to change. When he came out, Eleven was waiting for him.

Nodding towards her bedroom, the two were stopped when Hopper saw where they were heading.

“No, no, no,” he said from his spot on his bed. “Mike sleeps out here.”

El looked confused. “On my floor,” she explained. “I set up a fort.”

Both Mike and Hopper looked inside her room, and sure enough, she had made a small fort that extended from her bed to a chair a few feet in the middle of the room.

Mike couldn’t help but smile. The chief, though honestly thinking it was cute, still shook his head.

“He’s sleeping out here,” he stated.

“Why?” Eleven asked.

“Because...” Hopper glanced at Mike, then back at El. “You can’t sleep in the same room. I don’t want any funny business.”

“Funny business?” she asked.

Hopper sighed, not ready to have this talk right now.

“El, it’s okay,” Mike said. “Maybe in the morning we...”

“Compromise?” Eleven asked Hopper.

“Yeah? What’s that?” Hopper asked.

“Halfway happy,” Eleven explained.

“Yeah, I know, I...what do you mean?” Hopper asked.

“We leave my door open,” she explained.

“No,” Hopper said, shaking his head, “That’s still...”

“How about we make the fort out here?” Mike suggested.

Hopper glared at him, not wanting his assistance, but El’s eyes lit up at this idea.

“Razzafrassa Wheeler...” Hopper grumbled under his breath.

With Hopper’s help, they took the sheets from El’s bedroom fort and brought them into the main room. With a little work, they were able to make the fort larger than it had been in her room. Still, Hopper put two rows of cushions between Mike and Eleven before he settled into his own bed.

“Good night,” he called to the two of them.

“Night,” El called back.

Hopper fell asleep soon after, his gentle snoring the only sound in the small room. In the fort, Mike smiled when El moved one of the cushions so the two could get a better look at one another.

“Hi,” she said.

“Hi,” he said back.

She moved more of the cushions and scooted closer to him. Mike cast a glance at Hopper, but the big man was still sleeping soundly.

Finally close to Mike, El cuddled against him, sighing in content as she lay her head on his shoulder.

“I don’t want you to go,” she muttered.

“I don’t want to go, either,” Mike admitted. “Maybe Hop will let me come over again, and maybe with the guys, too.”

“I like it when it’s you and me,” she said quietly. She looked up at him to see his reaction; he blushed.

Their hands found each other, and that’s when El decided to ask her

question.

“Mike?”

“Hm?”

“We aren’t friends, are we?”

Mike looked confused. “What do you mean, El? Of course we’re friends. You’re my best friend.”

Sitting up a little bit, she said “But you aren’t friends with me like Dustin and Lucas. Or Will.”

Grinning a little, Mike admitted “No, I’m not.”

“Are we different friends?”

“Um, I guess,” Mike said, sitting up so he was leaning on his elbow. “Um...I was trying to wait until you didn’t have to hide, but, um...I was going to ask you if...you know...you, uh...wanted to be my...girlfriend.” He said this last part in a rushed whisper. She looked confused, so he continued. “Girlfriend and boyfriends, they, uh...”

“Boyfriend!” she said, a little louder than intended. They both looked over at Hopper, but the chief continued his snoring. Looking back at Mike, she said, “Sorry. Hopper called you boyfriend. What is that?”

Sighing, Mike said, “Boyfriend and girlfriend are special names two people give each other when they’re...I don’t know...special friends.”

Eleven thought of some of the things she did with Mike and not the others. “Boyfriend and girlfriend kiss? Hold hands?”

“Yeah, they do,” Mike said, his cheeks going pink.

Holding his hand, she asked, “Are you my boyfriend?”

“Um...if you want me to be.”

She smiled, and said “Yes. And can I be....”

“I think I’m supposed to ask *you* ,” he said, grinning at her. “Um,

El...will you be my girlfriend?"

She leaned closer and pecked his lips, giving him the answer he was hoping for.

There were still things to talk about, but both were happy as they lay next to each other, finally together and defining their relationship. El still wanted to know what that fluttery feeling was she felt in Mike's presence, and Mike still wanted to tell El *more* about what he felt for her, but that would have to wait for another day.

In the meantime, both were happy as they fell asleep, the cushions between them long forgotten as they lay side by side, hands clutching one another's.

Author's Note:

So, originally this was going to be revolved around El and her dictionary and using that to find an explanation for her feelings towards Mike. But once I started writing, I went in another direction. Oh, well. As always, thanks for reading. I'm half considering doing a sequel/follow-up where the two have the "I" word talk (would anyone read that?:)

Anyway, I appreciate comments if you want to leave them.